

1. A method of dispensing a strip product, said method comprising:
entering a plurality of guide arm positions for corresponding guide
arms of a strip fabrication assembly, into a guide arm controller device,
5 wherein the guide arms align a plurality of moving strip materials;
moving the corresponding guide arms of the strip fabrication
assembly to the respective guide arm positions using the guide arm
controller device; and
feeding a plurality of strip materials through the strip fabrication
10 assembly using the guide arms, after said moving step, to form an integrated
strip product.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein each of the guide arms is coupled to
a respective one of a plurality of threaded rods, and said moving step includes the
15 step of actuating a plurality of motors which are respectively coupled to the
threaded rods.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the guide arm controller device
includes a programmable logic controller, and further comprising the step of
20 programming the controller to control the motors in response to entry of guide arm
positions.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said entering step includes the steps
of:
25 listing a plurality of sets of previously entered guide arm positions
on a display device of the guide arm controller device; and
selecting one of the previously entered sets of arm positions as a
current set of arm positions, using an input interface of the guide arm
controller device.

30 5. The method of claim 1 wherein said entering step includes the steps
of:
searching for an order number associated with one of a plurality of
sets of previously entered guide arm positions; and

selecting one of the previously entered sets of guide arm positions as a current set of arm positions, using an input interface of the guide arm controller device.

5 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the plurality of guide arm positions is a first plurality of guide arm positions, and the integrated strip product is a first integrated strip product, further comprising the steps of:

entering a second plurality of guide arm positions into the guide arm controller device;

10 moving the corresponding guide arms of the strip fabrication assembly to the respective ones of the second plurality of arm positions using the guide arm controller device; and

feeding a plurality of strip materials through the strip fabrication assembly using the guide arms, after said moving step, to form a second
15 integrated strip product.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the guide arm controller device includes a programmable logic controller, and further comprising the step of programming the controller to allow for the entry and retention of multiple sets of
20 arm positions corresponding to different strip product orders.

8. An apparatus for controlling a guide arm system of a strip fabrication assembly, comprising:

a display device;
25 a user input device; and
a microcontroller connected to said display device and said user input device, said microcontroller having means for receiving a plurality of guide arm positions for corresponding guide arms which are entered into said user input device, and means for transmitting control signals to a
30 plurality of servo motors which are coupled respectively to the guide arms, to thereby move the guide arms based on the plurality of arm positions.

9. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said microcontroller is a programmable logic controller.

10. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said display device and said user input device comprise a single device.

5 11. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said microcontroller further has means for listing a plurality of sets of previously entered arm positions on said display device, and means for selecting one of the previously entered sets of arm positions as a current set of arm positions in response to said user input device.

10 12. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said microcontroller further has means for searching for an order number associated with one of a plurality of sets of previously entered arm positions, and means for selecting one of the previously entered sets of arm positions as a current set of arm positions, using said user input device.

15 13. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said microcontroller further has means for allowing the entry and retention of multiple sets of arm positions corresponding to different strip product orders.

20 14. A strip fabrication assembly comprising:
a plurality of feed rollers, positioned to integrate strip materials into a strip product;
a plurality of guide members located proximate said rollers, said guide members aligning a plurality of the strip materials; and
25 means for controlling the positions of said guide members.

15. The strip fabrication assembly of claim 14 wherein the guide members are tape dispensing arms.

30 16. The strip fabrication assembly of claim 14 wherein said controlling means includes a programmable logic controller.

17. The strip fabrication assembly of claim 14 wherein said controlling means includes a plurality of motors coupled respectively to said guide members.

18. The strip fabrication assembly of claim 17 wherein said controlling means receives a plurality of arm positions for corresponding guide arms, and transmits control signals to said motors to thereby move the guide arms based on the plurality of arm positions.

19. The strip fabrication assembly of claim 17 wherein said controlling means lists a plurality of sets of previously entered arm positions on a display device, and selects one of the previously entered sets of arm positions as a current set of arm positions in response to a user input device.

20. The strip fabrication assembly of claim 17 wherein said controlling means searches for an order number associated with one of a plurality of sets of previously entered arm positions, and selects one of the previously entered sets of arm positions as a current set of arm positions in response to a user input device.

21. The strip fabrication assembly of claim 17 wherein said controlling means allows the entry and retention of multiple sets of arm positions corresponding to different strip product orders.

22. A computer program product comprising:
a computer-readable storage medium; and
program instructions stored on said storage medium for controlling a guide arm system of a strip fabrication assembly, including program instructions for receiving a plurality of guide arm positions for corresponding guide arms, and program instructions for transmitting control signals to a plurality of motors which are coupled respectively to the guide arms, to thereby move the guide arms based on the plurality of arm positions.

23. The computer program product of claim 22 wherein said program instructions further provide a listing of a plurality of sets of previously entered guide arm positions, and allow a user to select one of the previously entered sets of guide arm positions as a current set of guide arm positions.

guide arm positions as a current set of guide arm positions.

24. The computer program product of claim 22 wherein said program instructions further search for an order number associated with one of a plurality of
5 sets of previously entered guide arm positions, and allow a user to select one of the previously entered sets of guide arm positions as a current set of guide arm positions.

25. The computer program product of claim 21 wherein said program
10 instructions further allow the entry and retention of multiple sets of arm positions corresponding to different strip product orders.

26. A method of positioning multiple operating units relative to a moving web, said method comprising:
15 entering a plurality of positions into a controller, said positions corresponding to a plurality of operating units;
moving said operating units to said positions in response to a signal from said controller;
sensing the position of an edge of a moving web; and,
20 when the position of the edge of said web changes, changing the position of said operating units.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein a web tracking unit senses the position of said edge of said moving web, said web tracking unit comprising a pair
25 of spaced optical sensors for directing light toward a web and receiving reflected light from the web, said sensors being capable of signaling a motor to move said sensors until a desired signal is received from said sensors.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the desired signal from said pair of
30 sensors is a "1" and a "0", the "1" being a reflection from a web, the "0" being no reflection, wherein said motor moves said sensors when the signal from said sensors is the same.

29. The method of claim 27, wherein said operating units comprise

guide arms.

30. An apparatus for controlling a number of operating units, said apparatus comprising:

- 5 a user interface;
a control system connected to said user interface, said control system comprising
- 10 a receiver for receiving a plurality of positions corresponding to a plurality of operating units, said plurality of positions being entered into said control system through said user interface, and
- a transmitter for transmitting control signals to a plurality of servo motors, which are coupled to the operating units, to thereby move the operating units based on the plurality of positions; and
- 15 a web tracking unit connected to said control system, said web tracking unit comprising sensors for sensing the position of an edge of a moving web.

31. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein when said web tracking unit senses a change in the position of the edge of a moving web, said web tracking unit

20 sends a signal to said control system to change the position of said operating units relative to the change in position of the edge of the moving web.

32. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein said operating units comprise guide arms.

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